

Speech of Minister Hendrik Croes.

Compañera y Compañeronan, Rumannan,

Permiti mi dirigi den nos idioma vernaculo palabranan caluroso di bonbini na nos compañeronan cu di exterior a bin honra nos partido cu su segundo lustro, mescos cu mi ta yama bonbini na nos lidernan y compañeronan di nos partido. Pa boso tur un fuerte abrazo di amistad y fraternidad.

Compañeras y compañeros, hermanos,

Hace unos seis años pasados que conjunto con el Presidente de nuestro Partido encontré por primera vez en Caracas en compañía del ilustre compañero Manuel Luis Penalver, este tiempo ministro de Educación de Venezuela, nuestro compañero Jaime Lusinchí y al abrir el encuentro con los funcionarios del ministerio de Educación, les pedími disculpa por expresiones deficientes que pueda provocar porque -asíles dije- mi español es muy enfermo. Compañero Lusinchí y todos nuestros amigos aquí de habla español, esa enfermedad no se ha vuelto peor, pero tampoco mucho mejor y por eso les trato dar mi introducción en el idioma Inglés, que de antemano deseo enfatizar, es solamente menos enfermo que mi Español. Es así mismo bien recordar que compañeros Chenco Yarzagaray, Roland Iaclé y yo visitamos compañero Carlos Morales despues de la Friedrich Ebert Foundation en Caracas, en enero del 1976 como primer paso a nuestra orientación Internacional.

Dear comrades,

When invited to speak to our congress on the subject of human rights, it is necessary to impose certain limitations, not only because much has been said already and is therefore common knowledge on the topic, but because of the nature of our congress, which not necessarily require philosophical arguments to strenghten the greatness of every one of the human rights, be it classical, political, economical, social or cultural.

When the MEP party was founded ten years ago, it was not a difficult choice for us, to adopt social democratic principles. Party founder late Ir. Cesare T. Terzano was most influential, in that process whereas the party founders although not feeling close affinity with the Dutch Labour Party, as devoted democrats wholeheartedly adopted the social democratic ideology but in our way, as has been eloquently expressed to you, by comrade Betico Croes, in his introduction of yesterday.

It is our belief that social democracy in Aruba and Latin America only because of the differences of its adoption might show discrepancies with the concept of our European colleagues, a fact of which comrade Willy Brandt in 1976 in Geneva already gave sufficient evidence.

The publicity created by some reactionary negative elements in and outside the Aruban society shows however that the road to social democracy is not and probably will never be the easiest way. Were it not for the brave and courageous stand of our party leaders with us here in this conference and outside and their firm confidence in the leader of Aruba that he will never let the Aruban people down, those reactionary elements would have overcome our party that has openly adopted social democratic principles.

But, comrades , we live in a democratic society and we hope that the conservative elements will continue to shout loud and clear because the louder they scream, the more convincing evidence they render that our MEP majority party of Aruba, is really and truthfully democratic and they will inspire us to continue on our route.

Human Rights were from the beginning included in the Party's declaration of principle in april 1971:

" The Movimiento Electoral di Pueblo declares in principle:

- "1. To base its activities on the Universal Declaration of the Human Rights,
" as proclaimed on December 10, 1948 by the General Assembly of the United Nations.
- "2. a. To be a political party for the whole Aruban community, without any
" distinction of race, religion, social standing, birth or any other status.
" b. To acknowledge that fundamental conditions for a sound and dynamic
" development of our Aruban community are:
" mutual understanding, tolerance and respect of the members
" of our community for one another.
" c. To support fully a positive development of the trade-unions and also
" the promotion of a social-economic stability between the interests
" of the employers, employees and consumers.
- "3. To strive towards the well-being in social, spiritual, cultural and
" material aspect of the Aruban community in particular and the Antillean
" community in general.
- "4. To advocate the democratic basis of our system of law, in accordance
" with which the people ought to have, actual full voice and in which
" sincerity in administration is not an exception but becomes a rule.
- "5. To strive towards a fundamental amendment of the constitutional law of
" the existing system of law through the amendment of the Statute for
" the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Constitution of the Netherlands Antil-
" les and the Islands regulation Netherlands Antilles.
" The MEP starts from the assumption that the Island territories ought to
" be politically, financial-economically independent without the tutoring
" of one island territory over the other."

This statement has been consistently reiterated through all other electoral manifests.

In 1977 we did elaborate a little more on the subject of social democracy and human rights:

- " The parties in the federal parliament and other international
" organizations who wish to cooperate with us, should accept our
" ideology as basis for such cooperation.
- " We with our social democratic principles do not prelude
" cooperation with parties of other ideology.
- " MEP shall demonstrate internationally solidarity with countries
" struggling for freedom and democracy and shall actively
" contribute to efforts for regional integration.

" MEP is totally aware that we should in our way of thinking
" divert our attention from Europe and direct more attention to
" our own region.
" Such will have as consequence several structural changes
" in the cultural educational as well as in the social
" economic field. In this respect a study shall be made in
" order to determine whether we should maintain Dutch or
" introduce a bilingual system of Spanish and English.
" MEP shall also promote the establishment in Aruba of an
" international Institute for Mini-States, that shall
" especially investigate how fundamental human rights can be
" enjoyed by Mini-States.
" The independent Aruba of tomorrow shall be a Mini-State
" and Aruba has more than any other Mini-State suffered
" how others have tried to take away from us our fundamental
" human rights to determine as a people our own future and
" status.
" Therefore Aruba with this Institute shall come forward in
" the international field to assist other Mini-States, similar
" to Aruba, especially in the Caribbean in order to attain
" with expert advice of this institute the goals of joint
" exploitation of our (sub) marine riches as well as develop
" a common strategy to deal with multinational companies
" to prevent that one Mini-State will be played against
" the other."

Why did the MEP from the beginning base all its political activities on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?

Because human rights focuses on the human being, on man.

MEP is like comrade Jaime Lusinchi last Wednesday stated with reference to his party Accion Democratica a humanist and populist organisation.

There is the inspirational base of its strenght.

In view of the abovesited declaration in principle, should it not come to you as astoundingly ridiculous and senseless all the accusations of the opposition parties and conservative bodies in Aruba that the MEP is communist and antidemocratic?

In his eminent speech in Geneva Willy Brandt called for an offensive in favour of human rights:

" The right to life is the most basic of all human rights.
" If we test this apparent commonplace against reality we
" shall be shocked to learn what our world is really like.
" The human rights are verbally embodied in the statutes of
" the United Nations and in almost every constitution.
" In reality they are effective only for a minority. Their
" violation, not their respect, is the rule to which the
" peoples are subjugated.

" And yet, if the human right did not exist, at least as
" a goal, as a hope, darkness would befall us. Resignation
" would mean surrender to injustice and despair. On behalf
" of the Socialist International I therefore call for a third
" Offensive - the offensive for the human rights.

" We have learnt that there are not only individual but also
" collective human rights. At the same time we know that
" collectives are the sum of their individuals. The concept
" of individuality may be interpreted differently in East
" and West, in North and South: The individual human life is
" both here and there a final, an ultimate value.
" Security of the material existence is the foundation of
" all other human rights. In view of death from starvation
" the right of free speech becomes an abstract value. Man
" does not live on bread alone, but he needs bread to live.
" The struggle against hunger, the struggle for work and
" social security- that is the beginning. But also where
" this beginning requires the utmost efforts it cannot be
" a licence for all kind of violence and arbitrariness.

" Violation of human rights in one part of the world is
" just as terrible as brutality in another. Our vision must
" be unobscured in all directions.

Unobscured in all directions brings me on comrade Carlos Morales' introduction from which we have learned that many fascist military regimes in Latin America grossly violate the fundamental right to life. We believe we should therefore as social democrats strongly and fiercely condemn the senseless assassinations and disappearances in Chile, Bolivia, Uruguay, Argentina, Guatemala, Paraguay, El Salvador.

The denial of the right of those millions, who had to leave their country (Chile, Uruguay, Bolivia) into exile to live and work in their birthland; the denial to engage in political activities, should likewise be condemned. And finally the government of Castro in Cuba that allowed the freedom flotilla to carry more than one hundred thousand Cubans to the U.S.A. should be confronted with the same criticism.

Our friends in Europe feel their right to life is being threatened by the arms race, because they fear they are to become the battlefield of a nuclear war between the two superpowers. It is quite clear, that should any nuclear war brake out, already with the present nuclear and chemical stockpiles, Latin America and the Caribbean are not to remain out of the disaster. The call for peace by comrade Bishop for the Caribbean and Latin America, should be endorsed and extended to the world.

Julius Ceasar wrote two thousand years ago: If you want peace, prepare for war.

At present time for our comrade Guillermo Ungo in 'El Salvador as well as to the rest of the world it seems, that Ceasar's slogan has become Reagan's slogan. It is clear that we are being called for the joint efforts to stave off the collision course against all peace efforts of the past. That means also that we should endorse the peace mission of Willy Brandt and S.I. in El Salvador. But friends, many other social problems are endangering the exercise of and enjoyment of human rights by our brothers and sisters in Latin America. The population of Latin America grew from 90 million in 1920 to 280 million in 1970 to a little less than 380 million in 1980.

In twenty years from now around 650 million Latin Americans will be calling on us for their right to life, to social rights, to education, to work, to be fed. Now already many children suffer irreparable braindamage as consequence of malnutrition after having overcome starvation.

Would we be able to meet the challenge by allowing them the enjoyment of human rights? How wide will then be the ever widening gap between rich and poor countries?

It is evident that strong well concerted joint action is needed.

Maybe we Latin Americans and Caribbean people can divert of the 2½ billion dollars we are spending now on arms some small percentages to more constructive ends. Those small percentages with the spirit of the Learning Society, as has been described by Schumacher in his classic "Small is Beautiful", can be the starting point to head off the collision course Schumacher has warned us for, not to speak of the Malthusian view on world population and starvation.

But we cannot fall into pessimism. We are obliged to find an acceptable way to solution, otherwise no social democracy and no freedom will exist. We are unanimous in questioning with criticism the new US administration approach to Latin America's dictatorial regimes, violators of human rights. One of the ways to influence the policy making in Washington is to appeal to their ability to think about what we consider inconsistencies.

Is it consistent to endorse the promising democratic process in Poland and to suppress democratic movements by granting financial aid to Chile and Argentina and El Salvador? Is it consistent to support the just struggle of the Afghan people against the pro Soviet clique of generals in Kabul and to term comrade Guillermo Ungo of El Salvador terrorist? Is it consistent with vital US interests in the long run to support military dictatorial regimes in Latin America, even if they are drugdealers as in Bolivia, who by their deals threaten the health of the US younger generation? Is this policy not causing more enemies, embittered by short term policy?

Violations of human rights, however, is not limited to non social democrats. Comrade Betico Croes already denounced the deplorable act of the Dutch Government in 1977, controlled by inter alia the Dutch Labour Party to trade Dutch support for Guatemala's standpoint on Belize in exchange for Guatemala's support for the Dutch Kingdom's standpoint on Aruba.

Since the massive protests of the Aruban people in 1977, it seems that the Dutch have changed their standpoint.

But, dear comrades, Aruba's deeprooted desire for the exercise of its fundamental human right of selfdetermination to determine its own political future as an independent nation- which right has been recognized and respected by our comrades and brothers from Curacao and Bonaire in the federal government- is still under fire by the Dutch government, that tends to oppose Aruba's independence for reasons, yet unknown to us.

This Dutch position is now carefully being analyzed by our party but is clear that should our concern prove to be right, this would mean in our eyes, gross violation of the right of the people of Aruba (as well as the people of any other island) to self determine its political status.

We might consider that imposing by means of persuasion or otherwise of a political structure by the colonizing power on its colonies against the wish of those colonized is a more censurable act of (neo) colonialism than the original act of colonisation itself.

Our party is very much aware that human rights in ministates are more vulnerable than in large units. We therefore strongly urge to adopt our initiative that an Institute for Ministates be founded with seat in the Caribbean, which might be the beginning of farther reaching initiatives for cooperation in our fractioned region. The Institute can render valuable assistance to individuals as well as states and/or groups of states in the field of implementing or enjoying human rights.

The appeal by the chairman of the Socialist International in 1976 for a large offensive in favour of human rights is still valid in full force as condition for the existence of man, his freedom and social democracy.

Thank you!

Aruba 20th March 1981